

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**BELMONT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**  
**TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2004**  
**BELMONT CITY HALL**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 200**

**CALL TO ORDER 4:03 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL**

Directors Present: Mathewson, Feierbach, Warden, Bauer (arr. 5:15 P.M.),  
Metropulos

Staff Present: District Manager Kersnar, City Attorney Savaree, Finance Director Fil,  
Human Resources Director Dolan, District Secretary Cook

**Discussion and Direction regarding: South County Fire Authority Budget, Fire Chief Status, and Potential Election for an Assessment District for the Belmont Fire Protection District.**

District Manager Kersnar stated that this meeting had been called at the request of the Belmont Fire Protection District (BFPD) directors to South County Fire Authority (SCFA). He noted that the Authority's budget had been adopted, but that certain amendments were to be considered at its next meeting.

District Manager Kersnar noted that SCFA did not yet have a permanent Fire Chief, and that this issue would be considered at its next meeting.

District Manager Kersnar stated that SCFA is currently under contract with Municipal Financial for conducting a survey for a potential assessment election. He noted that the issues to be determined were how to split the costs and how to structure the assessment to cover the entire service area of the Authority. He noted that Municipal Financial would need some background information to make its analysis.

Director Warden stated that during the Authority Board's Budget discussions, one issue raised was the role of the Redevelopment Agency and its effect on the tax increment. He expressed concerns that the money for potential salary improvements

appears in the Fire Budget prior to negotiations. Finance Director Fil clarified that money is placed in the fund balance and not appropriated to any specific category. He noted that negotiations are rarely completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, when Budgets must be adopted.

Discussion ensued regarding Budget and negotiations strategies.

Director Warden stated that the Fire Authority Board discussed providing all Councilmembers with a copy of the SCFA budget. Finance Director Fil stated that it was available at the City Clerk's office for review. Director Metropulos stated that he had been advised by firefighters that they experienced difficulties obtaining a copy of the Budget. Finance Director Fil clarified that there had been a miscommunication and misunderstanding of which Budget was being requested, which has since been rectified.

Director Feierbach stated that it is important for the public to be able to access the Budget as well.

Director Warden stated that SCFA had not had a permanent Fire Chief for six months. He noted that a consultant was hired, and that the SCFA Board could not agree on a full-time contract. He stated that this creates a level of uncertainty for a permanent hire, and he was concerned about the effect this may have on a potential assessment. He noted that the union was disappointed that Mr. Loudon was not hired as chief.

Director Feierbach stated that Interim Chief Loudon's final report was not comprehensive, and did not include issues that should have been addressed.

District Manager Kernsar stated that the Management Committee was disappointed with the report, but that the expectations may not have been made clear. He noted that options presented in the report would be discussed by the SCFA Board at its next meeting.

Director Metropulos stated that the hiring of a permanent chief at this time might send a mixed message prior to the assessment vote. He added that if it does not pass, the direction of the Authority could change.

Director Bauer stated that the school district may be placing another parcel tax on the ballot for consideration, and he was concerned about the cumulative dollar affect of too many initiatives.

District Manager Kernsar reviewed the difference between the way the Belmont Fire Protection District and the City of San Carlos each fund the South County Fire Authority.

Discussion ensued regarding the process for dissolutionment of the Authority, should that be the desired outcome.

Director Warden stated that the SCFA Board discussed options regarding the assessment, and still to be decided was whether or not to do a combined assessment or separate one for each jurisdiction. He noted that passage could be more likely if each city holds its own election. He added that the purpose of the Belmont Fire Protection District is to provide the best service for the community.

Director Feierbach stated that the BFPD might do better alone in an election, that she had concerns regarding fire personnel and the Proposition 218 election process. She added that she supported a separate election.

Discussion ensued regarding the fiscal impact of a successful election, and options for potential BFPD mergers with other jurisdictions.

District Manager Kersnar stated that Belmont could merge with San Mateo, and San Carlos could merge with Redwood City. He noted that economies of scale may not be achievable, but it could be operationally feasible.

Director Warden stated that there was no downside to holding separate elections other than perception by others. He stated the two cities could run separate elections, but work together to raise the odds of passage.

Director Bauer stated he could support the San Mateo/Redwood City merger concept, but was concerned with the SCFA organization.

Director Warden commented that his primary concern was for Belmont, and there was not a downside for separating if it still provided the best fire protection service.

Discussion ensued regarding options if one city passed the assessment and the other city did not.

The Directors concurred to communicate to the South County Fire Authority of Belmont's desire for a separate election, with the amount and term to be set by the Belmont Fire Protection District. They also directed staff to prepare a resolution for a contract with Municipal Financial to provide an assessment feasibility study for Belmont Fire Protection District.

**ADJOURNMENT** at this time, being 5:30 P.M.

Terri Cook

District Secretary

Meeting tape-recorded

Tape No. 584